

The hen bird was hopping on the ground and running about, with its tail very much erected, 'almost perpendicularly. The male bird alighted on a twig of a tree, just above the spot where the female was hopping about, and began to whistle a few notes. Next he also flew down to the ground and began to strut near the hen, much as a turkey-cock would do; his tail was stiff and pressed down, touching the ground. This performance was repeated three or four times, when they both began to feed, with the tails let down and not cocked up.

GANDHINAGAR,
KAKINADA,
February 17, 1955.

A. S. THYAGARAJU, M.A.

[A rather more elaborate description of the same display is given by Capt. C. R. Stonor in *The Ibis*, 1944—Vol. 86, p. 91—Eds.]

9. OCCURRENCE OF THE WHITEWINGED BLACK TERN (*CHLIDONIAS LEUCOPTERUS* TEMM.) IN SAURASHTRA

On 12-5-55 watching Avocets on a lake near Jasdan, I had the good fortune of seeing a Whitewinged Black Tern among a flock of Whiskered Terns. The bird flew very close to me and I had an excellent opportunity of noting its distinguishing characters. The black head and body, and white shoulders and tail are impossible to overlook, nor is it possible to mistake it for any other tern found here.

This is a second record for Jasdan and Saurashtra, the first being in June 1949 on a lake close to this one. This record, I understand was the first for the west coast of India, the previous ones having been from the Persian Gulf and Ceylon. Mr. Humayun Abdulali subsequently saw one near Bombay on 26th March 1950.

JASDAN,
SAURASHTRA,
May 13, 1955.

SHIVRAJKUMAR

10. BREEDING OF SARUS CRANE [*ANTIGONE* *A. ANTIGONE* (LINN.)] IN CAPTIVITY

A pair of Sarus Cranes in our Calcutta Zoo occupies an enclosure measuring about 187' × 195' along with some Nilgai, and there in a shallow pool in it lives a Gharial. This association of animals varying so widely in habit and character is no doubt very strange and unusual. Nevertheless they have been living there for many years in perfect peace and harmony. In this surrounding, the pair of Sarus was observed to build a nest, breed, hatch out a young and rear it during July-August, 1949.

Nest.—A shallow nest measuring approximately 2'-10" in diameter was built at a distance of 2'-2" from the water's edge. The nesting materials were twigs of Peepul (*Ficus religiosa* Linn.), Banyan

(*Ficus bengalensis* Linn.), leaves of Date (*Phoenix sylvestris* Roxb.), pieces of bones and other unusual materials that were handy inside the enclosure.

The nest, very simple and hardly 3.5" in depth, contained only one egg. Both cock and hen birds shared equally in nest building.

Incubation Period—The bird (birds?) started sitting on the egg from 14-7-49 and successfully hatched out a chick on 10-8-49 recording an incubation period of 28 days. There appears to be no previous record of the period of incubation of the Sarus Crane.

Blaauw in his Monograph of the Cranes observes: 'I find no exact information about the time of incubation of this Crane, but think it probable 30 days will be about the duration of it.'

The parents continued to keep constant watch over the chick and nursed it very carefully.

The Gharial who knew his old friends in the enclosure was apparently surprised at the sight of the new-comer. He did not seem to like the chick's unfamiliar presence inside the enclosure and felt excited. On several occasions when the chick moved into water along with its parents, the Gharial was observed to chase it as far as the edge of the water. Curiously enough, in each and every attempt of the Gharial to get at the chick he was repulsed and driven back by the parent birds in the usual Sarus manner by flapping of their wings and brave and loud trumpeting.

Food Habits—Evidently there was enough of available natural food on the site for the chick has been growing unusually fast and keeping healthy and buoyant. Earthworms apparently form the principal item of its food.

At first either of the parents was observed to dig out earthworms and collect aquatic as well as other kinds of insect food (grasshoppers, etc.) for the young and hold them at the level of the chick's beak, when the latter would take it rather lustily. No grain food was given by the parents to the chick at this stage.

The chick having now grown up, the parents would no longer follow the same process of feeding. They no doubt sought out the food as before, but instead of holding the same in their beak in front of the young they would dangle and drop it on the ground before the chick until it realized that it was something to be picked up by itself. Thus the Sarus Crane teaches its young the way of self-feeding.

It is interesting to watch a week old Sarus going freely into the water and swimming back to land unaided and unattended.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,
ALIPORE,
CALCUTTA 27,
June 6, 1955.

R. K. LAHIRI